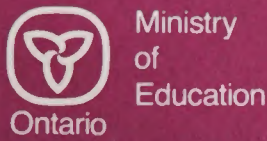


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Sean Conway, Minister
Bernard J. Shapiro, Deputy Minister

Curriculum Guideline

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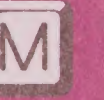
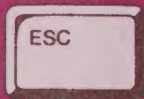
Intermediate

and

Senior

Divisions

(Grades 7 - 12)





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The Central Focus of English: Language Development

For students in the Intermediate and Senior Divisions, language is a process intimately linked with personal growth and the human need for articulation and communication. The development of a positive self-concept and the formation of positive attitudes are closely linked with the student's growing fluency, especially if sexist language and sex-role stereotyping are discouraged in both discussion and writing.

Growth during the adolescent years in the ability to think abstractly derives from the acquisition of the language of hypothesis. The ability to communicate effectively and precisely develops through the exploration of alternative ways of expressing ideas. Exposure to the language and literature of argument, emotion, self-exploration, and belief facilitates the development of personal values, relationships, and communicative abilities.

Language, even when it is imprecise, is a major source of power that students draw on in their attempts to cope with the world around them, to learn, to accomplish the goals they set for themselves, and to meet social and occupational responsibilities.

The increasing complexity of life and technology, the large number of students receiving postsecondary education or training, and the demands of government, social agencies, business, and industry for employees who can communicate effectively are all factors that indicate a need for a strong language component within the English program in our schools.

In most societies, children acquire the local language from adult models in their homes. In a developing, multi-cultural society such as Ontario's, many children grow up surrounded by adults who do not have full command of English. This means that the province's schools have both a difficult task and an essential role to play in helping students develop English language facility.

For many students in our schools, particularly in urban areas, the first language is not English, or is a variety of English that diverges widely from the Ontario dialect. Long after they have finished with reception programs, English-as-a-second-language programs, or English-as-a-second-dialect classes, such students need a well-structured English program and extensive help from all teachers if they are to develop to the limits of their potential and become fully participating adults in an English-speaking society.

The Importance of Literature and the Media

The Centrality of Literature

Students require frequent opportunities to enjoy and reflect upon the writing of others, to discuss their reactions with the teacher and their peers, and to create their own literature. If they learn to appreciate the beauty and the power of the written word, they are likely to become lifelong readers.

Literature continues to occupy a special place as a foundation of Canadian culture. It celebrates the richness, complexity, and variety of language, and it stimulates the imagination. Literature has the power to shape thought and understanding. For this reason, selections should enable students "to see men and women in a variety of roles, exhibiting a wide range of human behaviour, abilities, and emotions."¹ The vicarious experience literature offers is a subtle and powerful force in building the character of a nation and its people. Literature is an inspiring record of what men and women have enjoyed or endured, have done, and have dreamed of doing.

Canadian literature is especially powerful, for it embraces both traditional and contemporary English literature, the rich mythology and literature of our Native peoples, and the emotive literature that arises from pioneer and immigrant experiences, with the additional enrichment of translations from the many cultures that make up the Canadian mosaic. The creation and dissemination of Canadian literature can lead to increased understanding among our many peoples by establishing a deeper appreciation of one another's experiences.

1. Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions (Grades 7-12/OACs): Program and Diploma Requirements* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1984), p. 10.

Media Literacy

Media literacy is the understanding and appreciation of material presented directly through sound and visual images. It includes the ability to use both sound and images to communicate. Students need to learn the techniques of media and to practise using them to create. Just as they learn to compose a piece of writing, so they learn to compose a film, a diagram, a collage, a recording, or a sound track. This is not to suggest that courses or programs should be designed specifically to produce candidates for careers in the film, radio, or television industries, although some students may become interested and decide to pursue employment in these fields through further study beyond the secondary school level. The main reason for including media study in the Intermediate and Senior Divisions is to give students the experience and skills they need to understand, enjoy, and evaluate presentations in a variety of media. Students need to understand what the media convey, how they convey it, and the effects of the media and their messages on people's lives. To the extent that media study meets this need, it has a legitimate place in the English or language arts curriculum.

Visual materials will be of significant benefit to students who are visual learners, but they are also important in developing the capabilities of students whose predominant learning mode is not visual. Because classroom learning material is most commonly presented orally or in writing, visual media need to be integrated into lesson content to give balance to the program. A great deal of information is now available in data bases accessed through video media – both videodisks and videotext systems. As microcomputers come into increasing use in the classroom, teachers and students will have opportunities to access and use such data bases through interactive video software.

Just as the school is selective with regard to literature, so it should be in its choice of media and media materials; the latter should be considered integral to the English or language arts curriculum. To avoid repetition in programs and courses of study, media study should be spread over Grades 7 to 12 and adjusted to suit student development, teacher expertise, student interest, and the availability of materials and equipment.

This guideline supersedes *English, Intermediate Division, 1977* and *English, Senior Division, 1977*. All English programs and courses of study must be based on this new guideline or on other appropriate guidelines² and must derive from the provincial goals of education, the aims for Intermediate and Senior Division English, and the other policy statements identified in this document. The guideline provides direction in designing appropriate curricula for all levels and grades of the Intermediate and Senior Divisions.

Although the three Ontario Academic Courses (OACs) adhere to the basic philosophy underlying the teaching of English described in this guideline, the courses have a distinct focus and are not necessary for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. A student may graduate from secondary school with five credits in the advanced level without taking an OAC. The OACs are intended primarily for students who plan to go to university, both those who will study English there and those who will not. The OAC guideline identifies special objectives for the OACs, since they are designed to prepare students for postsecondary study, and prescribes a procedure for evaluating student achievement that may differ somewhat from that for Grades 7 to 12.

The principles and practices prescribed in this guideline for the Intermediate and Senior Divisions are to be implemented in comparable ways in semestered and non-semestered day school courses, night school and summer school courses, and courses developed by the Independent Learning Centre. Adjustments will be necessary, however, where students are not working in a classroom setting.

2. These include: *English, Ontario Academic Courses, 1984*; *Anglais/English, Intermediate and Senior Divisions, 1985*; *English as a Second Language/Dialect, Intermediate and Senior Divisions, 1977* (or its successor); and *Business Studies: Business English, Senior Division, 1987*.

The Provincial Goals of Education and the English Program

The goals of education consist of helping each student to:³

1. Develop a responsiveness to the dynamic processes of learning

Processes of learning include observing, sensing, inquiring, creating, analysing, synthesizing, evaluating, and communicating. The dynamic aspect of these processes derives from their source in many instinctive human activities, their application to real-life experiences, and their systematic interrelation within the curriculum.

These processes are essential components of the English program, which encourages personal response to literature and media in an environment that fosters communication. Through interaction with the teacher and their peers, students explore and clarify their thoughts and feelings and, in so doing, develop increasing facility with language and higher-level thinking skills such as synthesis and evaluation.

2. Develop resourcefulness, adaptability, and creativity in learning and living

These attributes apply to modes of study and inquiry, to the management of personal affairs such as career plans and leisure activities, and to the ability to deal effectively with challenge and change.

Teachers in the English program employ a variety of teaching methods to encourage students to adapt to various learning demands and styles. Students learn to deal with challenge and change by seeking solutions to problems both in groups and individually, and they learn to give and to accept constructive criticism in a spirit of collaboration.

Interaction in the English classroom demands creative responses essential for growth in self-understanding and self-management, both of which are essential for success in the workplace. The emphasis on the understanding and enjoyment of language, literature, and media and on the use of new technologies will enable students to derive full benefit from the leisure time they will have as adult workers.

3. Acquire the basic knowledge and skills needed to comprehend and express ideas through words, numbers, and other symbols

Such knowledge and skills will assist the learner in applying rational and intuitive processes to the identification and solution of problems by:

- a) using language aptly as a means of communication and an instrument of thought;*
- b) reading, listening, and viewing with comprehension and insight;*
- c) understanding and using mathematical operations and concepts.*

In the English or language arts curriculum, students learn to use language to communicate, to solve problems, to understand and follow instructions, and to respond critically to what they read, hear, and view. Knowledge is gained and skills acquired through constant interaction with texts, media, and other students.

4. Develop physical fitness and good health

Factors that contribute to fitness and good health include regular physical activity, an understanding of human biology and nutrition, the avoidance of health hazards, and concern for personal well-being.

Through dramatization, role playing, and simulation games and activities, students respond physically and imaginatively to course content. Through movement, students develop healthier bodies and learn about the creative potential of their bodies. Through exposure to literature and the media, students develop positive attitudes towards physical fitness and good health.

3. Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions, section 1.3, pp. 3-4.

5. Gain satisfaction from participating and from sharing the participation of others in various forms of artistic expression

Artistic expression involves the clarification and restructuring of personal perception and experience. It is found in the visual arts, music, drama, and literature, as well as in other areas of the curriculum where both the expressive and receptive capabilities of the learner are being developed.

As students read and listen to prose and poetry, and as they read, view, listen to, and act out plays, they respond through writing, speech, and drama. As they create their own literature and media, they share thoughts, ideas, and feelings with one another and with the teacher. Through these interactions, students clarify and restructure their own experiences with, and perceptions of, artistic endeavour and, in the process, develop unique personal responses to the arts.

6. Develop a feeling of self-worth

Self-worth is affected by internal and external influences. Internally it is fostered by realistic self-appraisal, confidence and conviction in the pursuit of excellence, self-discipline, and the satisfaction of achievement. Externally it is reinforced by encouragement, respect, and supportive evaluation.

The English or language arts classroom provides a non-threatening environment in which students are free to take risks. They come to understand that reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and dramatizing are processes through which they learn. They also learn that they need time to develop to the best of their capabilities and that their classmates and the teacher will provide support.

7. Develop an understanding of the role of the individual within the family and the role of the family within society

Within the family the individual shares responsibility, develops supportive relationships, and acquires values. Within society the family contributes to the stability and quality of a democratic way of life.

Through the exploration of themes in literature and on film and video, students learn to recognize the validity of various family configurations in a free and constantly changing society. Both literature and media illustrate diverse relationships in all their complexity.

8. Acquire skills that contribute to self-reliance in solving practical problems in everyday life

These skills relate to the skilful management of personal resources, effective participation in legal and civic transactions, the art of parenthood, responsible consumerism, the appropriate use of community agencies and services, the application of accident-prevention techniques, and a practical understanding of the basic technology of home maintenance.

Underlying the solution to many practical problems are the effective communication and sensitivity to the human condition that come from personal response to literature and the media. Well-developed reading skills allow the individual to follow directions, to acquire information by asking questions, and to discriminate between propaganda and evenhanded presentations. Independent learning and enrichment activities develop autonomy and a sense of social responsibility in the individual, particularly if the research is in areas that are relevant to the individual.

9. Develop a sense of personal responsibility in society at the local, national, and international levels

Awareness of personal responsibility in society grows out of knowledge and understanding of one's community, one's country, and the rest of the world. It is based on an understanding of social order, a respect for the law and the rights of others, and a concern for the quality of life at home and abroad.

The dynamic English classroom is a microcosm of society as well as a part of society. The vicarious experiences emanating from literature and media enhance growth in the values suggested here. Small-group learning, independent learning, and co-operative education promote acceptance of personal responsibility.

10. Develop esteem for the customs, cultures, and beliefs of a wide variety of societal groups

This goal is related to social concord and individual enrichment. In Canada it includes regard for:

- a) the Native peoples;*
- b) the English and French founding peoples;*
- c) multiculturalism;*
- d) national identity and unity.*

Literature and media programs portray the experiences of the Native and founding peoples of Canada, as well as those of the many other cultural groups that make up contemporary Canadian society. Such material provides students with opportunities to observe and appreciate the cultural mosaic unique to Canada. The supportive environment of the classroom, with its respect for student autonomy and for learning with and from other persons, further encourages intercultural understanding and an appreciation of the strength in cultural and racial diversity.

11. Acquire skills and attitudes that will lead to satisfaction and productivity in the world of work

In addition to the appropriate academic, technical, and interpersonal skills, this goal relates to good work habits, flexibility, initiative, leadership, the ability to cope with stress, and regard for the dignity of work.

In the English or language arts program, students learn to express themselves well orally and in writing, as they will need to do in the world of work. They also learn the importance of punctuality, meeting deadlines, and regular attendance. They learn to value priority setting, attention to and completion of tasks, co-operation with others, and their own competence. They acquire these attitudes through group learning and collaborative planning, independent learning, completion of a work diary, and teacher modelling.

12. Develop respect for the environment and a commitment to the wise use of resources

This goal relates to a knowledgeable concern for the quality of the environment, the careful use of natural resources, and the humane treatment of living things.

Teachers and students can work together to shape units stressing themes related to this goal, frequently with reference to the Canadian environment. Issues concerning environmental protection and wise resource use can be independent study topics for interested students.

13. Develop values related to personal, ethical, or religious beliefs and to the common welfare of society

Moral development in the school depends in part on a consideration of ethical principles and religious beliefs, a respect for the ideals held by others, and the identification of personal and societal values.

The development of personal values and beliefs and respect for the ideals of other persons are essential goals of an effective program. Exposure to various points of view leads to readier acceptance of persons from different ethnic and racial backgrounds, religious groups, and social classes and to enhanced respect for members of both sexes.

Aims for Intermediate and Senior Division English

Through interaction with their peers and the teacher, students shall have opportunities to:

- develop a lifelong love of reading;
- understand and enjoy literature and appreciate its significance in the history of human experience and imagination;
- become aware of themselves as readers and come to realize the worth and uniqueness of their own responses;
- become proficient in the mechanics of written language and in the use of oral and written language to think, learn, and communicate;
- use language to express and achieve personal, social, and career goals;
- understand the role that language, literature, and the media play in the exploration of intellectual issues and in the establishment of personal and societal values;
- develop critical skills and use them to respond to ideas communicated through the various media;
- prepare for productive community membership by taking personal responsibility for their progress towards self-directed learning;
- discuss ideas, attitudes, and feelings expressed in literature, language, and media in order to understand the contribution of individuals and communities to Canada's multicultural heritage.

Course Content and Compulsory Credits

In order to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), a student must successfully complete five compulsory credits in English.

For the purposes of this guideline, there are three categories of content:

I.	Language
II.	Literature
A.	Poetry
B.	Prose fiction
C.	Prose non-fiction
D.	Drama
III.	Media

Each type of literature should be included in the elementary school program and in at least four secondary school compulsory credits; language study, too, should be considered a core topic. Because considerable time will be needed to complete the learning processes required by this guideline, and because the number of works that can be studied in the classroom is limited by time, teachers should encourage extensive reading and viewing outside the classroom.

In at least four of the five compulsory credits, approximately one-third of the classroom time must be devoted to writing. The writing is to be kept in a writing folder or portfolio. Whatever the format of the folder, it should reflect the stages of the writing process and local program emphasis.

In Grades 7 and 8, media shall comprise approximately 10 per cent of the total instructional time allotted for language arts. The time allocated for media study may be divided between the two grades or designated for one grade only.

In secondary schools, media shall be included as a category of study for one-third of scheduled classroom time in one mandatory English course at each of the Intermediate and Senior Division levels.

The development of oral fluency through whole-class and group activities should be a prominent goal in all courses.

One of the five compulsory English credits may be earned from a course with a special emphasis. If such a course is offered, it shall be one of the following or shall combine two or more of the following in appropriate proportions, such as halves or thirty-hour modules (appropriate adjustments in the requirements outlined in the preceding paragraphs of this section may be made):

- a) a course in writing, emphasizing the workshop approach;
- b) a course in media literacy, including a substantial amount of creative activity;
- c) a course in business English;
- d) a course in oral language;
- e) an intensive study of a single category, such as drama, poetry, film, or the novel;
- f) independent study involving original research as well as research using secondary sources in the school resource centre and elsewhere;
- g) a school-related package, e.g., in technological studies;
- h) an integrated study in which aspects of other disciplines, such as history and science, or other art forms, such as music and painting, are related to literature;
- i) a course on a special theme or topic, such as satire, Canadian literature, children's literature, or the roles of women in literature;
- j) a course in linguistics in the Senior Division that covers the evolution and current state of the English language.

One or more Ontario Academic Courses may be used to satisfy the compulsory credit requirements in English. Such courses must be derived from the curriculum guideline *English, Ontario Academic Courses, 1984*.

Optional Credits

Secondary schools may offer optional English credits, in addition to the five compulsory English credits. Optional courses may be designed in a variety of ways, provided the objectives of each course comply with the appropriate “Aims for Intermediate and Senior Division English” set out on page 8 of this guideline.

Since the optional English courses may be somewhat different from the five compulsory courses in their specific objectives, evaluation of student achievement will need to be adjusted; however, in assigning marks, teachers must fulfil as far as possible the intention of this guideline, as outlined in “The Weighting of Marks”, page 12.

Fractional Credits

Fractional credits in English, based on thirty-hour modules, may be offered where convenient and advantageous.⁴ Thus, a school may offer a compulsory English course for one and one-half credits in Grade 9 and a similar course for one and one-half credits in Grade 10; or a half-credit course in English may be combined with a half-credit course in another subject area, such as dramatic arts, in either the Intermediate or the Senior Division. In the latter case, the half credit in dramatic arts will fulfil half the requirement of one credit in the arts for an OSSD.

4 Ibid., section 4.5.

Evaluation of Student Achievement

Purpose of Evaluation

The main purpose of evaluation is the promotion of learning, both for the student and for the teacher. Evaluation is more than a judgement made about performance after learning is supposed to have taken place. It is a continual, co-operative, comprehensive process that informs both students and their parents about student progress and achievement. Evaluation indicates to teachers where adjustments are required in curriculum content and materials, teaching methodology, student learning experiences, and assessment techniques.

Evaluation of student performance must be accurate, fair, and curriculum based if it is to encourage further learning. Before beginning a task, students should know the assessment techniques and the criteria that will be used to determine their progress and achievement, and they should frequently share in the selection of both.

School must be a satisfying yet challenging place in which to learn, a place where students make judgements about their own efforts and where they confer with their peers and teachers to plan improvements.

Self- and Peer Evaluation

Self-evaluation allows students to become aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, to determine their personal learning styles, and to become realistic about their own capabilities. They learn how important good work and study habits are as they realize the improvement that concerted effort brings. Self-evaluation helps students to understand what they are learning and why they are learning it. They develop a sense of self-worth as a result of sharing responsibility for their own learning.

Peer evaluation during the formative stages of learning provides students with a number of significant benefits. It offers a wider range of responses than the teacher alone can provide, opportunities to identify and understand criteria for judging achievement, experience in determining the effect one's work has on other people, and a valuable opportunity to receive non-threatening feedback. Students need time to develop their responding skills, and they need coaching from the teacher in giving constructive assessments.

Evaluation Techniques

Student evaluation requires the use of assessment or information-gathering techniques, including checklists, conferences, teacher observations, questionnaires, interviews, skill and attitude surveys, interest inventories, writing folders, rapid impression marking, analytic scales, tests, and examinations. In evaluating students' progress and achievement in English or language arts, teachers should use many of these techniques.

Although tests may be diagnostic, formative, or summative, examinations are primarily summative. For purposes of this guideline, examinations are defined as demonstrations or applications, under time and place constraints, of the skills and knowledge learned in the English program. They are more comprehensive than tests, and they come at the end of a significant portion or unit of a course, or at the end of the course.

Teachers must follow these guidelines concerning tests and examinations:

- Summative tests, but not examinations, are part of the Grade 7 and 8 language arts program.
- Examinations are optional at the basic level.
- Examinations are optional at the general level in the Intermediate Division.
- Examinations are compulsory at the general level in the Senior Division and at the advanced level in both the Intermediate and Senior Divisions.
- Summative tests or examinations may be oral, written, practical demonstration (including performance), or a combination of these.

Evaluation of student achievement in writing, small-group learning, oral language, work and study habits, and independent learning should include assessment of the learning processes as well as of the outcomes or products. Such evaluation must take into consideration a student's stage of development, the quality of the outcomes or products themselves, and any learning exceptionality a student may have.

The Weighting of Marks

In keeping with the aims of this guideline, final student marks in Grades 7 and 8 and at all levels of difficulty in secondary school should be weighted to reflect the proportion of time allotted to each activity. Although there will be some overlap among them, it is expected that the following categories and percentage ranges will be used:

Writing as process	20-30 per cent
Small-group or interactive learning and oral language	20-30 per cent
Work and study habits and independent learning	20-30 per cent
Summative tests or examinations	20-30 per cent
Total	100 per cent

Where, in the 20-30 per cent range, each category falls is the decision of the local jurisdiction. The percentages may differ from grade to grade in the Intermediate and Senior Divisions and from level to level in secondary school. In all grades and at all levels of difficulty, the report card grade or mark in English or language arts results from evaluation of both the processes and the products of learning. In the Intermediate Division, particularly in Grades 7 and 8, the emphasis in evaluation should be on the processes of learning; in the Senior Division, the processes and the products of learning should be equally weighted.

Students at all levels of difficulty should receive the same mark for meeting – or not meeting – their course objectives. A student should be able to get 100 per cent, no matter what the grade or level, if he or she has met the course objectives.

Co-operative Education

*A co-operative education course consists of an in-school component and an out-of-school component so that learning and experience are combined in an educationally beneficial way.*⁵

All students in secondary school are eligible to participate in co-operative education courses. These courses extend, supplement, and enrich classroom teaching by taking advantage of both human and material resources available in the local community. Out-of-school learning experiences permit students to investigate particular careers that interest them and/or that they are planning to undertake.

Specific conditions exist for earning credits through co-operative education courses. These are described in detail on pages 25 to 27 of *Ontario Schools, Intermediate and Senior Divisions* (OSIS).

When students are involved in real-life situations beyond the school, they participate in experiential learning; they gain confidence, feelings of self-worth, and a sense of responsibility from contributing to joint efforts; they discover the need to acquire both general and specific life skills; and they profit from mistakes as well as from successes.

When students are involved in co-operative education placements, their in-school teachers gain support from the out-of-school instructors, whose expertise and interest in students enhance rather than replace the efforts of the teacher and the objectives of the curriculum. Students discover the connections between school and their personal goals in life, and they learn that their contribution to society matters.

It is essential that the out-of-school component of any co-operative education course be monitored by the English teacher responsible for the in-school component; as well, the two components must be linked in a coherent and balanced way. Thus, for example, a student might satisfy much of the media study requirement of an English course by working as a writer for a local newspaper. Much of the in-class requirement for writing could be related to this outside work, and the writing kept in a folder.

Learning experiences beyond the classroom offer students the opportunity to:

- use modern technology, including data banks and word processors;
- clarify career goals;
- accept responsibility for completing tasks;
- produce their best efforts;
- learn the importance of regular attendance and punctuality;
- work with others in a real workplace.

⁵ Ibid., section 5.11, p. 25

General Characteristics of All Programs

OSIS (sections 3.4 and 4.6) details the general characteristics of programs in all subjects for Grades 7 and 8 and for basic, general, and advanced levels of secondary school. Differences between the grades in curriculum should influence the selection of materials and resources, the choice of teaching and learning strategies, and the selection of assessment techniques. These differences thereby guide teachers in the provision of distinct and suitable programs.

An English or language arts course may be structured in a variety of ways. The focus may be on a theme; it may be on specific topics, approached through a combination of language, literature, and media; it may be on specific literary genres. Or, if it is a course fulfilling one of the five required English credits in secondary school, it may have a special emphasis (see page 9).

Grades 7 and 8 Language Arts

The focus for Grades 7 and 8 is on an integrated, comprehensive approach to the acquisition of knowledge, to the development and practice of skills, and to the formation of positive attitudes and values. Students need opportunities to continue to develop unique talents and to explore a wide range of academic interests.

The language arts program should be designed to give students frequent opportunities to enjoy and experience literature and the media. Time should be set aside regularly for students to read in the classroom and for the teacher to read to the students. The approach to literature should be based on extensive reading, to increase the likelihood of addressing all of the widely varying interests and needs represented in a Grade 7 or 8 class. Discussion should focus on personal responses to themes and ideas rather than on analysis. Hence the literature might best be organized by theme or by author. Many gifted writers (Jill Paton Walsh, Monica Hughes, Richard Peck, and others) have contributed significantly to the body of work available to these students.

The program must also allow students to develop language and thinking skills through small-group interaction and through the composing process described in the “Writing” section of this guideline.

The language arts curriculum should be delivered in such a way that student responsibility and independence are fostered:

In addition to a broad common program of studies, it is important in the early years of the Intermediate Division to develop opportunities for students to make responsible choices, exercise personal initiatives, and investigate and study independently.⁶

Such investigation and independent learning allow students to consolidate their understanding and knowledge and to develop self-confidence.

6. Ibid., section 3.4, p. 13

Basic Level English

The focus of the basic level English program in secondary school is on two areas: the development of personal skills, social understanding, and self-confidence; and preparation for the world of work. Students should perceive the program as personally useful. It should provide them with a positive approach to employment and to leisure, and it should encourage their desire to learn. Teachers should frequently read aloud to students from a variety of appropriate literary selections; as well, students should have time to read interesting shorter selections in class and to discuss what they have read.

Opportunities to learn on the job, through co-operative education placements, are especially important in the basic level program so that students see the relationship between success in school and success at work.

In designing courses for basic level English, educators should consult the curriculum support document *Basically Right*,⁷ published by the Ministry of Education.

General Level English

Preparation for employment, careers, or further education in the colleges of applied arts and technology and other non-degree-granting institutions is an important purpose of the general level English program. The program addresses the need for students to read, write, listen, speak, and view with confidence and clarity and to participate as thinking, active, and compassionate citizens in a democratic society.

Communication skills are essential for success in the world of work, and aesthetic sensitivity is essential for personal satisfaction and enjoyment. To develop both sensitivity and communication skills, students should read in class daily from a wide variety of literature and should talk and write about what they have read. Teachers should demonstrate that they value literature by reading with and to their students and by frequently writing when the students write.

The program should be balanced — with due attention given to all the areas of content — and integrated, both within the content areas and, where feasible, with other subjects in the curriculum.

⁷ Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Basically Right, Intermediate and Senior Divisions*

¹ Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1984).

Advanced Level English

Although many of the skills and much of the knowledge detailed for the basic and general levels of instruction are applicable to the advanced level, there are some additional areas of import in this program. Academic skills that prepare students for tertiary education are the focus of study, especially in the Senior Division. Courses should offer students opportunities to understand the roles of language, literature, and other media both in learning and in personal well-being; and they should offer students opportunities to express this knowledge in a variety of oral and written forms. Students should, in addition to understanding themes, begin to understand structure and style through the study of literature drawn from various time periods.

Students taking advanced level courses should be encouraged to pursue academic interests and talents not only for their own personal development but also for the contributions that their abilities will enable them to make to their communities and to society at large.

Ontario Academic Courses

Ontario Academic Courses (OACs), described in a separate curriculum guideline (*English, Ontario Academic Courses, 1984*), are intended for students who plan to go to university. Although OSIS allows the OACs to be used to meet compulsory course requirements, wherever possible alternative English courses should be available for students needing to complete mandatory course requirements but not planning to go on to university.

Oral Language

Listening: Aural Perception

Listening is more than hearing; it is an active process of making sense out of and storing messages received through the ear. The brain discriminates among these messages, interprets and evaluates them, and then directs responses in some way. Students should learn that when the messages are speech, the speaker's intonation, voice volume, stress, pitch, speed of delivery, appearance, and body language are factors that influence interpretation, evaluation, and response.

Students, like adults, listen better when they are stimulated by and interested in what they hear, when they understand what they are listening for, and when they know what activity will follow. It is important that students listen to one another as well as to the teacher. In return, it is necessary, if students are to value their own contributions, for their peers and the teacher to listen to what they have to say.

Teachers should not assume that they can bring about improvement in listening merely by increasing the amount of student dialogue in the classroom or by increasing the amount of reading students do. Although reading and discussion are excellent activities, planned teacher intervention is also needed to increase students' attention span, to sharpen their acuity, and to teach them appropriate criteria by which to evaluate what they hear. Above all the teacher must model good listening behaviour for students every day.

Throughout the Intermediate and Senior Divisions, students should have opportunities to listen in the following ways:

a)	<i>selectively</i>	– to gain information and knowledge
b)	<i>critically</i>	– to ask questions – to analyse, organize, summarize, and categorize information – to distinguish the important from the less important and the unimportant – to detect bias expressed through emotionally loaded words and exaggeration – to explore the accuracy and reliability of spoken language
c)	<i>attentively</i>	– to follow instructions or directions – to follow arguments of varying degrees of intensity
d)	<i>reflectively</i>	– to understand how ideas can be clarified and distorted in speech
e)	<i>creatively</i>	– to enjoy the beauty of the spoken word – to exercise the imagination
f)	<i>courteously</i>	– to show respect for persons whose ideas are different from their own

Oral Expression

The kinds of oral expression that take place in an English or language arts class can be divided into two categories: informal talk and formal expression.

Students use informal talk to make thought explicit to themselves as well as to other persons and to assimilate new concepts and knowledge before they attempt the more technical and formal language used in textbooks. The teacher promotes talk to build social relationships among students. By talking in pairs, in small groups, and with the whole class, students learn to co-operate and collaborate.

Starting with informal talk, the teacher leads students to the realization that oral expression can be more structured and formal, or more polished and sculptured, depending on the purpose of the speaker, the content, the context, and the audience. In the integrated English and language arts curriculum, much student response to literature, language study, media, field trips, theatre visits, and other experiences will be oral. Students should have opportunities to express themselves in a variety of forums, including panels, interviews, seminars, and debates, and to deliver speeches and oral reports. They should learn how to introduce and thank a speaker, make announcements, and ask and answer questions.

Polished and sculptured, as opposed to structured, language reveals to students the beauty and power of words. Here the purpose of language is enjoyment. Monologues, role playing, simulations, improvisations, choral reading, choral speaking, storytelling, reader's theatre, recitations, interpretive oral reading, and prepared dramatic presentations are means by which students can learn to love and appreciate literature, including Canadian literature. All of these oral language activities should be part of the English and language arts curriculum in Grades 7 to 12.

Reading

Students learn to “read” a photograph, play, television program, film, and the like, as surely as they learn to read a book. Effective reading, of whatever type, is a constant search for meaning. Perception leads to understanding and to a response in the perceiver's language.

As students progress from the Junior Division to the Intermediate and Senior Divisions, they continue to need instruction in order to cope with the new patterns of writing they encounter. Concepts become more abstract and complex, vocabulary more specialized, syntax more complex.

Curriculum must provide students with an increasing range of opportunities to understand and appreciate literature and to comprehend the varieties of informative and persuasive language found in textbooks, reference books, and other non-literary materials. To understand how functional prose is constructed, students must see how transition words or phrases are used to link one paragraph to the next and how words and phrases are used to convey the relationships between ideas within a paragraph.

Students must have instruction in navigating their way through functional prose, so that they may develop cueing systems for detecting meaning. They must learn to read efficiently and to absorb new information quickly; they must also learn to switch from one pattern and form of written material to another as they move from class to class in school. Furthermore, they need to acquire independence in locating, selecting, and using information for some purpose. In sum, they must become functional readers.

Students in the Intermediate Division, at all levels of instruction, should read extensively from a wide variety of literature. They should read for understanding and enjoyment, and for development of personal tastes. Because they will have responded to poetry, narrative, and other literary genres in the Intermediate Division, students in the Senior Division, particularly those in advanced level courses, should begin to develop skills of literary criticism (still based on personal response) that they can use to come to a deeper appreciation of their literary heritage.

Skills in text analysis should develop naturally from the challenge of trying to understand literature and to share that understanding with others, whether orally, in writing, or through dramatization. It is in this sense that analysis of literature is part of the English or language arts curriculum in the Intermediate and Senior Divisions.

Writing

As they proceed through the Intermediate and Senior Divisions, all students continue to need frequent opportunities to write spontaneously, in purely private and personal ways, in order to develop thought, imagination, and values. They should experiment with a variety of forms that allow them to express feelings, to speculate, and to respond to the evocative language of literature — for example, diaries, journals, logs, lists, dialogues, letters, poetry, and narratives about events both remembered and invented. In both the Intermediate and Senior Divisions, as in the earlier years of their schooling, students need to continue to develop precise and logical language with which to process and communicate information.

Language is important in many subjects across the school curriculum, in addition to English and language arts. Students use it to write reports, summaries, outlines, editorials, notes, commentaries, essays, and examination answers. When students leave school, business, industry, and the professions will require that they be competent in writing reports, letters, memoranda, records, and critical reviews. Postsecondary educational institutions will expect their students to write critiques, reports, short essays in response to examination questions, and long essays supporting an argument.

The careful, reasoned substantiation of a thesis in orderly prose is what scientists must be skilled at as well as lawyers, government officials, and business administrators — in fact anyone who wishes to effect any change of the most minor kind in contemporary society. Furthermore, argumentative discourse must be preceded by reasoned thinking, the kind of thinking that is central to the academic enterprise. For these reasons it is appropriate — indeed, essential — that teachers devote class time and personal energy to developing their students' abilities in this mode.⁸

Although much attention must be given to this type of academic writing, it must not displace writing that expresses personal thoughts and emotional responses. Whatever the mode, teachers should make a practice of writing with their students in the classroom and of sharing their work in progress with individual students and the whole class. This practice not only allows teachers to model writing behaviour, it also sharpens their awareness of the problems students encounter as they write.

Although writing is a recursive, not a linear, process, it has identifiable stages. In the prewriting stage, the student prepares to write. This stage is characterized by creative generation and gathering of ideas; by an incubation period for thinking about and selecting ideas and information; by talk with other students and the teacher; and by the crystallization of a writing focus. Students' personal observations, experiences, improvisations, games, interviews, brainstormings, and discussions, as well as their responses to literature, newspapers, magazines, computer programs, trips, music, sculpture, television, films, slides, tapes, and records, provide stimuli for writing.

In the writing stage, students try to get their thoughts on paper or on the computer screen. Although this is frequently a solitary activity, it is often useful to have students work in pairs or in small groups. Ideas can thus be suggested or expanded. The focus here is primarily on expression, not correctness; the latter can be attended to when the first draft is revised and edited. Revision occurs when students manipulate content, and editing is the process of polishing the surface of the writing — attending to the mechanics of spelling, punctuation, and syntax.

The postwriting stage follows revision, editing, and proofreading. Students share their writing with other students, with the teacher, and with wider audiences via bulletin boards, literary magazines, school newspapers, oral reading, or dramatization. Students may rework some pieces at a later date in the semester or school year as new insights, knowledge, or attitudes emerge. Not all writing will progress to this final stage.

Some writers may produce effective writing at once; others will need several drafts. Students must learn how to revise, edit, and proofread their work so that they can develop their own language resources; and they must understand that editing includes attending to proper paragraphing, syntax, diction, grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation. Finally, both students and teachers should realize that the ability to write develops very slowly over many years:

One of the most dangerous ... fallacies underlying popular commentary on the writing abilities of today's students is that the ability to write good prose is a relatively simple skill which should be established early in the educational process and maintained at a level of perfection for ever afterwards. This is simply not true. On the contrary, the ability to write satisfactory prose involves an extraordinarily complex set of skills, which continue to grow, though unevenly, throughout the educational process.⁹

8. Ian Pringle and Aviva Freedman, *A Comparative Study of Writing Abilities in Two Modes at the Grade 5, 8, and 12 Levels*, Research Study (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1985), p. 124

9. Ibid., p. 127

The Writing Folder

At any point in the school year or semester, the work in the writing folder or portfolio demonstrates the student's development in writing to date and gives the teacher insight into the student's interests and concerns. In so doing, it provides an important focus for both student-teacher conferences and parent-teacher discussions.

Whatever the format of the folder, its various sections should demonstrate the main stages in the process of writing. When students move individual pieces of writing back and forth from one section to another as they draft, redraft, and sometimes begin anew, they come to understand that writing is a process that is not linear but recursive. Students develop a sense of ownership that fosters responsible decision making, not only concerning what they should write about, but also concerning what directions they should take for improvement.

The sections of the writing folder contain material at all stages of the composing process, from scraps of notes and jottings, to drafts, to finished pieces. At all stages of development, the student's writing is available for discussion with other students and the teacher. Through collaboration, students contribute to one another's progress, and by maintaining the folder, they learn that effective writing takes time and practice.

Viewing: Media Literacy

Attention to viewing provides students with proficiency in perceiving, and communicating through, both fixed and moving images. Many of the skills and capabilities that students need for reading print they also need for reading visuals.

Visual perception includes determining the main idea or theme, noting supporting details, looking for cause-and-effect relationships, using context as a clue to meaning, and understanding sequenced events. Painting, sculpture, films, television, videotapes, filmstrips, live theatre, dance, diagrams, photographs, and computer graphics are some of the visuals that students should learn to read, for information and enjoyment.

Students should approach viewing, like other forms of reading, using logical, critical, and creative thought. They should seek to understand, appreciate, and make judgements about what they perceive.

Media literacy requires basic knowledge of the language of vision. Such visual components as colour, shape, composition, line, light, texture, pattern, framing, movement, and juxtaposition constitute a grammar for understanding and discussing the relative merits of media images. These components exist in combination with one another and not as single entities.

Because the components of various visual forms differ in frequency, intensity, and complexity, visual forms differ in their demands on viewers. Moving images require rapid holistic reading by means of a compilation of many specific details. Fixed images necessitate more reflective reading and pauses for speculation about specific aspects of composition and choice of visual medium.

The study of media in both the Intermediate and Senior Divisions should make students visually literate and conscious of their viewing habits without overwhelming them with technical language. Students should read and produce visual media as well as practise other language arts: speaking, listening, writing, dramatizing, and reading print. In so doing, they are acquiring skills and knowledge that will assist them in managing their own lives in what has popularly been called "the information age".

Language Study

Language study means both improving or enriching language use and talking about, exploring, and studying how the English language works. Children come to school capable of fairly sophisticated communication using language acquired, without study, within the family and the community. In school they extend this language to serve new purposes, again without any explicit instruction in how language works.

Like all languages, Canadian English encompasses a wide range of variations, both in its spoken and written forms, depending on the region, the context (say, a recipe versus a farm auction), the audience (sports-page reader versus fashion-section reader, for example), and so on. Although Ontario schools have an obligation to help students use standard varieties of written and spoken English, they can immeasurably enrich children's ability to use the language by encouraging them to practise and use as many levels as possible.

Students may be given chances to observe and try to emulate the kinds of language used in settings as different as the stock exchange, a factory, a newsroom, a history class, a meeting of the local town or city council, the provincial or national parliament, a business meeting, a hospital, an immigration office, and a social agency. They should have occasions to use language to perform different functions, including persuading, describing, informing, imagining, recording, questioning, giving instructions, and clarifying. They must have occasions to use language in situations in which, as speakers or writers, they have varying relationships to their audience: distant, casual, intimate, formal.

English usage is, in part, a matter of recognizing and conforming to the expectations in our society that different forms of language are appropriate in different contexts. Although a certain amount of explicit teaching about the specific features of different styles may help students to increase their repertoire, they undoubtedly will learn more from observing (reading or hearing) different kinds of language in use and trying to imitate them.

Formal Grammar

Grammar instruction provides students with a language about language.

*Who can, after all, unlock the vagaries of a muddled sentence unless he or she can identify the essential elements of the sentence and the methods of expansion and modification?*¹⁰

What is important is the way teachers approach grammar. They must present it, not as a closed set of rules, but as a way of describing language and of understanding it as living patterns. Instruction must be based on students' language achievement to date and focused on areas that need understanding and development. Which areas these are can be determined effectively at the school and classroom levels.

Any formal instruction in grammar that is undertaken must be based on a linguistically valid empirical analysis of the grammar of standard English. Such instruction should not exceed 10 per cent of the total course time and should concentrate on a few aspects of English grammar, such as subject-verb agreement and parallel structure. The aim should not be to provide a body of knowledge that can be tested. Instead, the aim should be to help students become aware of how the elements of their language work. Data for such study should come from students' own writing.

As well, students should come to some understanding of how words are constructed and how they relate to other words in context. They should have knowledge and understanding of grammatical terminology sufficient to allow them to discuss, edit, and revise their own and others' writing.

10. James Squire, "The Basics and Current Research", in *The English Curriculum Under Fire: What Are the Real Basics?*, ed. George Hillocks, Jr. (Urbana, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1982), p. 35

Strategies for Developing Proficiency in Grammar

Teachers have a number of strategies by which they help students to develop proficiency in usage and grammar without teaching rules in isolation. These approaches, many of which have been emphasized in the Primary and Junior Divisions, concentrate on learning by doing things with language and then reflecting on the results. The subject of study should be the student's own language, both oral and written, as well as models from good literature.

Effective strategies for developing proficiency in grammar make use of the following techniques and resources:

1. extensive reading;

Probably the most effective way of familiarizing students with varieties of usage is by having them read extensively from a variety of materials, both fiction and non-fiction, that model appropriate language for particular situations. If the texts illustrate contrasting styles, and the styles are related to differences in audience, purpose, and subject matter, then the reading will be most effective, and students' writing skills will benefit.

2. conferences;

Frequent conferences between student and teacher, using the student's own writing as the text for discussion of some aspect of language, are effective means to help overcome difficulties.

3. individualized assignments;

Students with specific problems can be given tailor-made assignments that address their problems.

4. peers;

Students should work together as partners or in small groups, editing and proofreading one another's writing. At first students should confine themselves to comparatively simple tasks, such as checking for misspellings. As their confidence, experience, and competence grow, they should undertake more demanding editorial tasks, including correcting grammar and assessing overall structure.

5. standard references;

Dictionaries (general and specialized) and usage handbooks provide students with the means to check their own usage. Students should know how to use these reference books and should be encouraged to use them. Every English classroom should contain a class set of dictionaries, a usage handbook, and a thesaurus. Teachers should ensure that the first two contain accurate information about Canadian meanings, spellings, pronunciation, syntax, and usage.

6. computers;

Certain computer word-processing programs generate students' interest in learning how to write. They offer opportunities for students to work independently or in conjunction with one or two others in carrying out a task. A good word-processing program enables students to rework, revise, and edit as they compose on screen. They can thus increase their skills in revision without the tedium of recopying.

7. sentence combining.

Sentence combining generally has a positive effect on student writing. By combining the central ideas of sentences in ways that exemplify the basic structures of the language, students produce written work that displays sophistication in language usage. This approach – having students write sentences rather than learn rules for constructing more complex sentences – seems to be an effective way of developing students' writing style.

Punctuation

Students should learn that punctuation is important to readers, providing the signposts on the page or computer screen necessary for making sense out of text.

Students should not be given lists of punctuation rules to memorize. Instead, they should write dialogue, which they should regularly read aloud for diagnosis by other students. Through repetition with oral language, students discover the rules for effective punctuation and can apply them to their own writing with understanding.¹¹

Spelling

Spelling is one of the communication skills necessary for the effective expression of ideas. As such, it should not be approached as a school subject, in the usual sense, to be learned in isolation; nor should it become an end in itself. When spelling is taught in the context of ongoing classroom work, students come to see it as an important skill for communication rather than as a pedantic exercise. Students should not do exercises with words they already know how to spell and use correctly.

Successful spellers are those students who have the attitudes, habits, and skills necessary for spelling precision and who understand that spelling is a personal responsibility. However, if teachers place too much emphasis on correct spelling, students will be reluctant to experiment with new words to express new ideas.

The words that students need to learn to spell are those that they write and read; such words come from every subject area. In addition, many students will need help with certain words they often misspell and words that they have heard or read and want to use, but are not sure how to spell.

Students require a dictionary and a thesaurus as they revise and rework initial writing and search for just the right word to use in a specific context. They continue to need the dictionary at the proofreading stage, when they must eliminate errors that impede communication.

Because spelling ability is highly variable, the amount of time needed to learn to spell correctly differs among students. This difference should be reflected in classroom practice.

¹¹ James Moffet, *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968).

Sentence and Paragraph Structure

Students learn to recognize that sentences are used for varying purposes: to make statements, to ask questions, and to give commands. They also study patterns of sentence construction in various contexts and learn why certain patterns are more effective than others in specific situations. This approach allows them both to write with greater confidence and to comprehend better what they read.

Knowledge of the rudiments of paragraph construction comes from studying paragraphs drawn from various sources. Students learn that paragraphs can be structured in several ways and that they do not always have to begin with a topic sentence.

By examining pieces of discourse, students learn the importance of unity within a paragraph and the contribution of individual paragraphs to the unity and coherence of the whole piece.

The Integrated English and Language Arts Curriculum

Students must understand that reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and dramatizing are not subjects in the curriculum, but processes that they use in combination to explore and to extend their abilities to think, to learn, and to communicate. They must understand that processes share prominence in the curriculum with the products of interaction and learning and that the skill and expertise they acquire in carrying out these processes largely determine their success in virtually all school subjects. Thus, in the ideal English or language arts program, students have daily practice in both expressing ideas and interpreting the expressions of others.

Students may read and then discuss their reactions with other students and the teacher. They may write in personal terms about what they read, hear, or view. They may view a movie based on a novel or short story and compare the two media. They may even make their own television documentaries, modelled on samples viewed in class or at home. Activities such as these, in which students experience curriculum integration, help students to mature as learners and to acquire personal tastes in both print and non-print media.

Successful implementation of an integrated curriculum is more likely to occur when teachers co-operate with one another and with the teacher-librarian to plan, present, and evaluate the English or language arts program. Fragmenting the English or language arts timetable by breaking up the time allocated to English into more than one time slot in a day or dividing up the curriculum among a number of teachers works against the integration required by this guideline.

Interactive Learning

Our society values persons who can think, imagine, create, take responsibility, and make judgements and decisions, both independently and in conjunction with others. The English and language arts curriculum, Grades 7 to 12, requires that students be given abundant opportunities to acquire these skills and attitudes and so naturally places an emphasis on interactive learning.

Accordingly, the curriculum stresses that students:

- actively participate in their own learning, interacting with both their peers and the teacher in an integrated program;
- hypothesize and take risks as they meet new concepts, ideas, and materials;
- learn to ask questions and to solve problems;
- be allowed to select topics and curriculum areas to explore, so that they can become autonomous learners;
- make judgements regularly about their own progress and achievement and that of their peers.

In order to maximize learning, students need to have some say in the objectives of their program, the methods of instruction and interaction, and the assessment techniques and evaluation criteria used to determine their success.

Learning Styles

A great deal of research is now taking place in an effort to understand how human beings learn. Theorists differ in specifics, but there is general agreement that every learner has a predominant mode of learning and a unique way of processing information. This means that students learn most readily when they can use their preferred learning style. At the same time, students need to develop alternative ways of learning if they are to work with other persons and if they are to broaden the range of thinking strategies available to them.

Teachers must help students to identify their major learning styles, must capitalize on these, and must provide opportunities for students to move from stronger to weaker modes as new ideas or concepts become familiar. When students recognize how they learn best, and gain confidence in adding to their repertoire, they come to understand that specific tasks suit one style more than another. At this point, they can select the best match between what is to be learned and how they will learn it.

In addition, teachers must identify their own predominant learning style, since it affects the way they teach and determines, to a great extent, which students benefit most. When one method of teaching predominates, the student whose major learning style differs is at a disadvantage.

Teachers require confidence and proficiency in a variety of methods if maximum learning is to take place. Without allowing one approach to predominate, the curriculum must provide students with opportunities to learn independently, in small groups, and with the whole class, under the teacher's direction. Independent learning and small-group learning must share equal time in the curriculum with teacher-directed Socratic lessons, and all approaches must be interactive.

Besides being distinct in themselves, the various approaches are interdependent. When students work on individual assignments, they periodically seek responses from individuals and small groups. Similarly, when they are part of a small group, students may contribute independently to a combined group effort. Whole-class lessons provide a framework for learning, the foundation for follow-up group and independent activities, and a means of addressing common learning problems.

These modes of learning are reflected in the evaluation categories listed on page 12. Although the categories have been separated for purposes of evaluation, they are interwoven in the curriculum.

Small-Group, or Collaborative, Learning

Small-group learning is a method that uses peer interaction and co-operation to help students learn collaboratively. It is a fundamental activity of Ontario's English or language arts curriculum.

Students interacting in small groups make full use of expressive and receptive modes of communication. As they brainstorm, converse, and solve problems, they extend their ability to initiate discussion of an idea, to clarify and elaborate on personal positions, and to consolidate what they have learned. By investigating and illuminating many points of view and attitudes, students learn to modify as well as reinforce their own positions, to work with others towards a shared goal, and to accept responsibility for their own learning. A group activity may require students to respond to a previous learning experience, to plan approaches to a new task, to accomplish a task, or to present the results of learning to others.

In small groups, students can explore and respond to literature, media, and the major stages in the writing process; in the supportive environment of their peers, they can become actively involved in their learning. In such an environment, they can confirm understanding and seek clarification.

Students involved in small-group learning develop and practise high-level thinking skills, learn from their peers, and internalize criteria for critical thought; but most of all, they clarify thinking and gain knowledge through informal exploratory talk.

Small-group learning is most likely to be successful if students have:

- a warm and supportive classroom atmosphere where productive interaction can occur;
- flexible classroom seating arrangements;
- the human and material resources necessary to attain their goals;
- sufficient time to complete a task;
- tasks set out in manageable steps;
- constructive interaction with the teacher as group learning proceeds;
- consensus on how to proceed;
- a clear division of labour;
- appropriate group organization to accomplish their goals;
- tact in responding to one another and the teacher;
- understanding of how to contribute to a group without dominating it;
- a strong sense that there are real purposes and valued outcomes for their work;
- clear goals to pursue;
- dedication to learning that comes from interest and involvement.

Students in Grades 7 and 8 usually remain together throughout the day. As a result, they know one another and the teacher very well. In this secure environment, the small-group approach can teach students several things: how to work constructively with their peers, what roles individuals can assume in group interaction, how to record and report, and what criteria to use to judge their progress.

In Grades 7 and 8, the marks assigned to small-group learning should be weighted more heavily towards the process of learning together than towards the products of that learning.

In the secondary grades, at the basic level, small-group learning should, if possible, be limited to single-period activities, with emphasis on positive experiences in working with others towards a common goal. Students are more likely to succeed when assignments and activities are clear and simple, when they understand the learning objectives of the tasks, and when they know how to investigate and improvise.

When students present the outcomes of group learning to the class or to the teacher, either orally or in some written and/or graphic form, teachers should make every effort to ensure a positive reception. The presentation should be limited to a short talk, a demonstration of practical operations, a display of models and illustrations, a dramatization of scripted or unscripted scenes, an audiotape of interviews or discussions, or a brief written report. Writing, except as an aid to memory, should not be made an important part of group learning at the basic level.

Evaluation should emphasize successful co-operation rather than knowledge acquired. The process of working with others towards a shared goal should be an important focus of learning at the basic level.

Teacher, peer, and self-evaluation should be used for group presentations. Use of a checklist is a simple way to achieve this, particularly if the list is co-ordinated with the objectives set at the beginning of the activity. Observations recorded by the teacher as work progresses are very beneficial in providing information needed to adjust the program for individual students.

At the general level, group activities should be fairly short, although some, especially in the Senior Division, may extend over two or three periods. As students become more self-directed, they need the freedom to choose topics for interaction and to select strategies for achieving objectives. Oral presentations, dramatizations, and other creative activities are appropriate and desirable. As at all other levels of instruction, the criteria for evaluation should be set out clearly before students begin to work.

Students begin in the Intermediate Division with short, informal presentations that capitalize on their strengths. As they gain confidence and maturity, they may make longer presentations that require more formal approaches. Products of learning share prominence with the processes of small-group learning at the general level.

Students at the advanced level are learning both to contribute to the learning of others and to benefit from the knowledge and critical response of their peers. The emphasis in the Senior Division is on an academically or aesthetically satisfying product. By Grade 12, students in advanced level courses should be demonstrating a fairly sophisticated level of presentation, including superior verbal and written skills and some facility in graphics and performance.

Small-group learning allows students at the advanced level to develop leadership skills, with an emphasis on intellectual leadership, and to demonstrate open-minded acceptance of constructive criticism. Through sharing with one another and the teacher, students come to realize the importance of their contribution to the pool of knowledge in the classroom.

In the Senior Division of the advanced level, teachers should place more emphasis on the products of interaction and learning than on the processes students use.

Independent Learning

Independent learning is a mode of learning that promotes student autonomy in the acquisition of skills and knowledge. It is best considered a series of activities through which students grow from teacher dependency to self-direction. Independent learning develops through a sequence of planned steps involving reading, talking to other persons, brainstorming, collecting and mulling over ideas, selecting a topic and a point of view, researching, problem solving, recording conclusions or solutions, reworking, and presenting.

Autonomy in learning evolves from good work and study habits, interest and initiative, self-respect and pride in oneself, commitment to the completion of tasks, and regard for the rights of others. It manifests itself most clearly in students' ability to define needs and interests, to make intelligent and responsible choices, to organize, to produce according to a plan, and to achieve success through co-operative interaction with others.

Recognizing the diversity of individual abilities and interests, the ministry views the learner as an active participant in education who gains satisfaction from the dynamics of learning. The concept of the learner as a mere processor of information has been replaced by the image of the self-motivated, self-directed problem-solver, aware of both the processes and uses of learning and deriving a sense of self-worth and confidence from a variety of accomplishments.¹²

In order to acquire the independent mode of learning, students must exhibit sound work and study habits and certain personal attributes. In particular, students must:

- attend class regularly and punctually, bringing books, pens, and pencils;
- maintain legible, up-to-date notebooks;
- complete homework regularly;
- finish assignments on time;
- know how and when to ask for help or direction from the teacher and others;
- know how to pose and answer questions;
- lay out tasks in steps;
- know how to report information in a variety of ways;
- be familiar with and know how to use a variety of resources;
- have good research and selection skills and use the school resource centre regularly;
- set priorities;
- exercise initiative;
- exercise self-discipline;
- be courteous and get along well with others;
- take direction and implement suggestions;
- have confidence in their ability to learn.

12. Ministry of Education and Ministry of Colleges and Universities, Ontario, *Issues and Directions: The Response to the Final Report of the Commission on Declining School Enrolments in Ontario* (Toronto: Ministry of Education and Ministry of Colleges and Universities, Ontario, 1980), p. 2.

In Grades 7 and 8 and in the Intermediate Division of secondary school, the English and language arts curriculum focuses on the work and study habits integral to independent learning. Since students in Grades 7 and 8 range from those with few good work and study habits to those already capable of independent learning, the length of time individual students work on their own, the length of time required to complete an assignment, and the nature of the final presentation must be allowed to vary widely. Topics for exploration should also be allowed wide variation.

Study in Grades 9 and 10 of the basic level is focused on personal interests; in Grades 11 and 12, on life skills or career subjects. Final presentations should be oral, graphic, or dramatic more often than written.

At the general level, students' investigations are primarily practical or closely related to the kind of career they hope to pursue. Much of their research, especially in the senior grades, occurs outside the school, in the community.

Through independent learning at the advanced level, students develop the attitudes and skills necessary for academic study and for dealing with the large volumes of information and resources available in postsecondary education. Like the general and basic programs, the advanced program teaches students to prize quality results. By the time these students graduate from secondary school, they should be self-directed learners.

At all grades and levels, independent learning requires note-making and record-keeping skills. Instruction and regular classroom practice will help students to develop these skills.

Independent learning activities may be allotted a block of time, or they may be part of the ongoing total program and hence accomplished over a longer period of time. As work proceeds, some classroom time will be necessary for student-teacher conferences and for group sharing. The age, maturity, and capability of the students are important considerations in these scheduling decisions.

Learning Through Drama

To some educators, dramatizing means "putting on a play". And indeed, this use of drama provides unique opportunities for students to experience communication, collaboration, co-operation, concentration, and self-discipline. But the separation of drama from the rest of the curriculum is artificial; drama can be a powerful teaching tool in most subject areas, including English and language arts. It helps students understand the notion of refining their work to enhance its impact on an audience.

Drama impresses upon students the concept that there is more to learn about persons, events, and situations than what they already know. Active engagement and personal involvement lead to new insights as drama breathes life into language and literature. Participation in the action forces students to scrutinize motivations and reasons for behaviour; to view characters, situations, and events from more than one perspective; and to become more involved and reflective than they would be in the silent, analytical reading of a text.

*The acting out of roles involves the exploration and representation of meaning through the medium of the whole person – body, voice, mind, and emotion.*¹³

In role play, students "step out of themselves" to become involved physically, emotionally, and intellectually in exploring the private thoughts and deep feelings that motivate people.

*Role-play ... is enacting a personal reality, not an arranged scene. It is used in a sequence and spontaneously, whenever, for example, we can say – "Show us what happened", or "Show us what you mean", or "Show how you see it happening".*¹⁴

Such interaction by groups of students with characters and happenings leads not only to greater understanding of writers, their themes, and their purposes, but also to greater awareness and tolerance of the opinions and interpretations of others. In fact, participation in dramatic activity does more: it offers students a voyage of self-discovery in which, by clarifying and establishing personal values, they come to a deeper understanding of what they think and believe, and why.

13. Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Dramatic Arts: Intermediate and Senior Divisions*, 1981 (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1981), p. 6.

14. Jon Nixon, *Drama and the Whole Curriculum* (London, Eng.: Hutchison and Company, 1982), p. 69.

Involved in drama, students progress from use of habitual language patterns to precise selection of words, actions, and gestures. They grow from making few decisions to acting independently. They learn to shape and refine language to suit particular contexts.

Choral reading, choral speaking, simulations, storytelling, monologues, pantomime, recitations, and prepared dramatic presentations provide students with a wide variety of means of learning, and they offer teachers opportunities for collaborative coaching of their students.

Students' success in learning through drama depends to a great extent on the teacher's guidance and encouragement. The teacher, acting as mentor or coach, intervenes without intruding on the action, leads students to deeper awareness through reflective thought, challenges assumptions and interpretations that are superficial or otherwise inadequate, points out options open to students for further exploration, and raises issues that students might otherwise overlook.

When learning is rooted in such first-hand experience, the classroom comes alive and language flourishes. In developing oral language and in opening up a whole world of expression that otherwise might remain inaccessible, drama is a fundamental manifestation of the learning process.

When we are engaged in the field of curriculum — that is, when we plan and implement programs, or when we assess students or evaluate courses of study — we ignore the human drama at our peril. To do so is to deny that we are human beings — that students and teachers encounter one another in a living drama whereby they both create meaning out of what they do.¹⁵

Technology in the Classroom

The English curriculum must reflect the technological as well as the sociological changes that are occurring in our society as we approach the twenty-first century. As the cost of good educational hardware decreases and the availability of good educational software increases, teachers will have opportunities to enhance and even to restructure their English programs. Students will learn to use new information technologies, such as computers, videodisks, and telecommunications, not only as tools of communication, but also, and more important, as tools of collaborative and interactive learning.

In the last decade, there have been major developments in the technologies associated with microcomputers, telecommunications, data storage devices, printing machines, and video recorders — developments that have the potential to substantially alter the quantity, quality, and nature of interactions in the classroom. Technology can facilitate both individualized instruction and collaborative learning.

A number of models for learning are prevalent in computer literature. The transmission model uses the computer as a tutor or an electronic textbook, feeding preprogrammed packages of information to students. The interactive or collaborative model uses the computer as a spur to conversation, problem solving, and creative thought as students work with one another to generate knowledge and information on screen.

15. Richard Courtney, *The Dramatic Curriculum* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1980), p. 2

The second model has the greater potential for learning because it is open-ended, governed only by the imagination of the students and the limits of present technology. Students can collaborate in constructing and interrogating data bases and spreadsheets, using graphics to clarify or enhance their formulations, and composing on screen using a word-processing program. Although exercises and drills found in the transmission programs may be of some use, overemphasis on these programs takes valuable time from the interactive model of learning advocated by this guideline.

*Collaboration in writing has value for intertwining and developing all the language arts. While writing is the task, the methods include speaking, listening, and reading. The pleasant irony is that the most sophisticated technology in our schools furthers learning of the most basic skills.*¹⁶

New forms of peer interaction are appearing. One of these is simultaneous manipulation of the same text by two or more students, at either the same or different locations:

*If as an English teacher you want an analogy for the computer, don't think of it as a glorified typewriter. Think of it as a telephone. There's someone on the other end.*¹⁷

Using Data Bases

The computer is an important tool for managing data bases, highly structured patterns of material organized and stored for use in English. Students create their own categories for data entry. The way in which the data are then organized for retrieval — by topic, by author, by title, or alphabetically — will depend on the capabilities of the computer program.

Constructing data bases is a dynamic and interactive high-technology activity that stimulates thinking. Through manipulating language, students come to comprehend concepts and internalize meaning. As they compile, sort, edit, and change data bases to suit their own requirements, students learn that the vast amount of information available can be structured for use.

Using the Computer for Writing

Computers make the process of generating language, reworking and revising text, and presenting neatly printed copy much easier for many students. They can extemporize freely, and by progressive steps they can group ideas into coherent structures, verbalizing as they think.

Word-processing programs allow for continual upgrading of written material. Blocks of print can be moved easily from one place to another in the text, and errors can be corrected easily; these features free students to focus on sorting or sifting ideas or on polishing them for presentation. The drudgery of recopying successive drafts is alleviated, so the writer can concentrate on composition. The neatness of the final printed copy generates self-esteem and lends authority to the work.

Because the student's writing is displayed on a screen, the importance of detail becomes evident, and the external features of writing, such as spelling, punctuation, and layout, are more readily attended to.

Writing at the computer can be a group as well as a solitary activity; it can even enhance socialization. Students learn to respond critically, but with interest and respect, to their own and others' work.

The new technologies, like other devices and techniques for learning and communicating, are open to abuse. The teacher's task is to incorporate technology wisely, in keeping with the objectives of the curriculum, the teaching situation, and the capabilities of the students. Like all other learned skills, facility with new technologies cannot be hurried, but rather must develop over time.

¹⁶ J. L. Heap, Principal Investigator, *Collaboration in Word Processing — The Impact of Technology on Education: The Evolving Role of the Students*, Final Report of the Project on Collaboration in Word Processing (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1985), p. 59.

¹⁷ Randy Smye, "Computer Innovations for Teaching the Writing Process", paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Canadian Council of Teachers of English, Fredericton, N.B., Aug. 20-24, 1984.

Programs for Exceptional Students

Universal access to education is a fundamental principle of our society. All students must have the opportunity to develop to their full potential so that they may participate in society with competence, integrity, and dignity. Educators must adapt the curriculum as necessary to allow exceptional students to achieve their potential. Exceptional students may elect to take courses at the basic, general, or advanced level of instruction, and the courses must be modified in accordance with their special needs.

The ministry has defined the various areas of exceptional-ity as: behavioural, communicational, intellectual (including giftedness), physical, and multiple. An Identification, Placement, and Review Committee of a school board identifies students as exceptional, identifies the learning needs of these students, and recommends appropriate educational placements.

Exceptional students require learning experiences that correspond to their identified needs, abilities, interests, and personal goals. These students may require extra time to grasp concepts and to assimilate new learning, or they may learn very quickly and seek opportunities to broaden the scope of their inquiry and knowledge. Adaptations may be necessary in one or more of the following: course content, teaching strategies, performance expectations, resources, and assessment techniques used for evaluation.

Other teachers within the school, including board support staff where they are available, can provide valuable assistance to the classroom teacher. Learning resource teachers, teacher-librarians, subject specialists, special education consultants, guidance counsellors, and the classroom teacher can work together as a team to develop appropriate curricula for exceptional students. Resource staff may also help classroom teachers obtain specialized equipment or personnel to assist in carrying out their programs.

Using Resources and Selecting Learning Materials

Resources, both human and material, are essential for an effective curriculum, whether students are learning independently, in small groups, or with the teacher. Academic achievement, continuation of education, and future career flexibility depend to a great extent on students' capabilities in locating information, gathering and selecting pertinent data, and organizing and using what they have gathered to answer their questions or solve their problems.

Class trips or individual visits to businesses, industries, theatres, galleries, museums, science centres, and other places of interest expose students to real-life sources of information in the community. Many professionals and other persons will take the time to visit schools, to talk with students and answer their questions. The knowledge and expertise they bring add credibility to the learning and interest to the classroom program.

Public libraries and learning resource centres in schools play a pivotal role in the English and language arts curriculum, providing students with books, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, films, pictures, video and audio cassettes, television, and computer programs for investigating topics and preparing assignments.

To achieve the active and interactive learning prescribed in this guideline, students will need both the skills and the confidence to design and ask questions, to find answers, and to use the information that they gain. The teacher's role is to facilitate independent learning: "Planning and directing learning experiences are now central to the teaching role."¹⁸

¹⁸ Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Partners in Action: The Library Resource Centre in the School Curriculum* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1982), p. 4

The Role of the Teacher-Librarian

As learning-materials specialists and experienced classroom teachers, teacher-librarians are indispensable to the implementation of the curriculum described in this document. In partnership with the classroom teacher, they influence the total curriculum process, enhancing content and program delivery. Co-operation between classroom teachers and teacher-librarians includes comprehensive planning for student development from Grade 7 to 12, selection of new materials to add to the school collection, and team teaching.

As participants in curriculum delivery, teacher-librarians need to be very knowledgeable about the English and language arts curriculum. Their active involvement in language workshops, other in-service sessions, conferences, and English department meetings will provide them with first-hand knowledge about the content, teaching strategies, and evaluation procedures of the curriculum.

The learning resource centre provides students with opportunities to learn how to investigate and locate materials, select and interpret information, and record and use data.

A co-operatively developed, sequential program for teaching these skills can ensure that students learn the skills in the context of meaningful curriculum-related activities.¹⁹

Learning Materials

The English or language arts curriculum should be supported by learning materials that stimulate development in students' factual knowledge, literary appreciation, critical analysis, aesthetic values, and social awareness. Students come from various ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds and have differing needs and abilities as well as differing interests and aspirations; educators at the local level must select high-quality learning materials in which this diversity is recognized. In selecting materials, teachers must consider the age and maturity of the students, as well as local sensibilities and expectations.

What follows is a list of suggested selection criteria. English or language arts learning materials should:

- reflect the stated aims and objectives of the program they are intended to support;
- be appropriate to the age, ability, and social and emotional maturity of the students;
- stimulate growth not only in factual knowledge but also in aesthetic appreciation;
- represent a balance between today's world and the world of the past;
- reflect our pluralistic society and the many contributions made by both men and women and by minority and ethnic groups;
- stimulate the ability to critically evaluate both the form and the content of materials;
- motivate students and staff to examine their own attitudes and behaviour and develop a sense of their duties, responsibilities, rights, and privileges as participating citizens in our society;
- be chosen for their positive features rather than rejected for their negative qualities;
- be selected on the basis of reason and principle rather than personal opinion and bias;
- pertain to a variety of subject areas across the curriculum;
- include quality books and other media by Canadians who represent the creative and artistic talent of our nation.²⁰

19 Ibid., p 9

20. Adapted from the Board of Education for the City of Hamilton, "Selection of Learning Materials Policy", 1980, and Ministry of Education, Ontario, *Race, Religion, and Culture in Ontario School Materials* (Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1980).

Criteria for Developing and Evaluating the English Program

Educators who devise the English and language arts curriculum at the local level may need additional criteria to guide them in differentiating between levels of difficulty and between grades. What follows are some suggested criteria. Educators at the local level will naturally add to these criteria as they plan together.

Specific attention should be given to continuity from grade to grade within each level of difficulty – continuity in methodology, content, evaluation, and skill acquisition. Planning should reflect guideline policy, community expectations, and student and teacher preferences. It should have as a goal the growth and development of both students and teachers. Particular attention must be given to the need for different emphases at different grade levels, to ensure growth in interactive ability.

Elementary teachers of Grades 7 and 8 and their secondary school counterparts will need to meet regularly to ensure that the curriculum provides for the smooth transition of students from one panel to the next. Teachers responsible for teaching English or language arts within a school will also need to meet regularly to plan, monitor, evaluate, and make adjustments to specific aspects of the programs they offer. They will need to meet periodically with program support personnel who can help them to provide growth in learning from grade to grade and to extend their teaching repertoire.

Choices of content, methods, and additional resources figure prominently in planning for developmental and incremental learning across the divisions. Decisions should be based on evidence of student needs, progress, and achievement.

Objectives

Expectations for students in particular levels of difficulty and grades with regard to knowledge gained, skills acquired, and attitudes and values developed depend mainly on the overall aims and objectives of the program.

The balance among oral, written, performed, and project-based activities using various media and/or the microcomputer may differ from level to level and from grade to grade.

Content

Content for the language arts and English curriculum is language, literature, and media. Examples should be chosen to reflect the aims and objectives of the program and the capabilities of students, including their maturity and ability to think abstractly. Because specific content is selected locally, teachers must form networks and collaborate to avoid needless repetition of books and other materials in successive grades.

Teaching/Learning Strategies

Inspiration for learning comes from myriad sources, including the school and the community, resource centres, other persons, and personal experiences. Curiosity, desire to learn, and satisfaction in learning are normal human attributes on which successful teachers capitalize in collaboration with their students.

Some texts and media require close and deliberate reading and viewing for understanding and appreciation; others deal primarily with information or straightforward narrative and require understanding but little reflection. Although all students should be exposed to materials of varying difficulty, programs and courses of study should present material geared to the ability of the students and the desired outcomes.

All students should learn to scan, skim, read for main ideas and for details, read and summarize for study and recall purposes, and read for recreation and enjoyment. They should be given opportunities to respond to the media both emotionally and intellectually.

The interests, capabilities, and attention span of the students, purposes of the assignments, and objectives of the program together determine the length, number, and kinds of tasks that should be assigned at each level and grade.

The importance of specific topics or themes compared with others in the curriculum, the personal goals of the students, the interest generated in the activities, and the range of methodologies available to the teacher should help to determine the length of time students spend on each curriculum area.

Evaluation

Assessment techniques should be varied and numerous. In choosing techniques, teachers and students together should consider students' favoured learning styles and the tasks and outcomes required by specific assignments. Knowledge, skills, and attitudes whose achievement is delineated in the program or course of study should be assessed.

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Project Co-ordinator
Centre for Secondary and Adult
Education
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Gwen Mowbray
Project Leader
Hamilton Board of Education

Writing Team

Clare Henderson
Halton Board of Education

Callista Markotich
Frontenac-Lennox
and Addington Roman
Catholic School Board

Patrick O'Malley
Sudbury Board of Education

Ryder Payne
York Board of Education

Wally Watkins
Halton Board of Education

Advisory Committee

Sharon Anderson
Oxford County Board
of Education

John Borovilos
Toronto Board of Education

Gray Cavanagh
Central Ontario Region
Ministry of Education

Betty Chambers
North York Board
of Education

Paula Clary
Lambton County Board
of Education

Micki Clemens
Halton Board of Education

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Windsor Roman Catholic
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